

























Amphibian and Reptile Species of Interest in Northwest Arkansas

Please report Benton, Carroll, Crawford, Madison, and Washington County sightings of the following species to HerpsOfArkansas.com. Photographic evidence is valuable if available. Please, do not collect specimens.

<p>Boreal Chorus Frog (<i>Pseudacris maculata</i>)</p> 	<p>Identification: This small, tan species has 3 dark, thin (and usually broken) dorsal stripes. It is practically indistinguishable from its sister-species, the Cajun Chorus Frog, except for a noticeably faster trill rate in the call.</p> <p>Habitat: This species prefers marshy grasslands.</p> <p>Status: The only confirmed population of this species in the state is from the vicinity of Pea Ridge, Benton County. Its status is unknown from Carroll, Crawford, Madison, and Washington counties.</p>
<p>Strecker's Chorus Frog (<i>Pseudacris streckeri</i>)</p> 	<p>Identification: This medium-sized chorus frog has a dark stripe that extends from the shoulder through the eye and onto the side. The groin area is yellowish. The forelimbs are stout.</p> <p>Habitat: A variety of habitats are suitable, but primarily utilizes flooded fields and similar habitats for breeding in February and March.</p> <p>Status: Nearest Arkansas records are from the Arkansas River Valley (including Crawford County), but records from extreme northeastern Oklahoma suggest that the species may just edge into western Benton and Washington counties.</p>
<p>Western Narrow-mouthed Toad (<i>Gastrophryne olivacea</i>)</p> 	<p>Identification: This small, plump frog has a pointed snout and fold above the eyes. It has a plain whitish belly (unlike the similar, more common Eastern Narrowmouth Toad, which has a black and white mottled belly).</p> <p>Habitat: This species prefers grasslands. It preys exclusively on ants. It may be turned up under rocks and logs.</p> <p>Status: Unpublished records come from Crawford County. Records from Oklahoma and Missouri suggest the species may occur in Benton and Washington counties.</p>
<p>Plains Leopard Frog (<i>Lithobates blairi</i>)</p> 	<p>Identification: This species is spotted like a "leopard". It is distinguished from the similar-looking and very common Southern Leopard Frog in that the dorsolateral folds are broken near the groin, inside the thighs is yellowish, and a dark spot is always present on top of the snout.</p> <p>Habitat: A variety of aquatic habitats are suitable, especially in and around water-filled ditches and farm ponds. It may be found crossing roads on rainy and/or humid nights.</p> <p>Status: Records from extreme northeastern Oklahoma suggest that this species may just edge into the northwestern-most corner of Benton County. It is documented in the state from a single specimen in Northeast Arkansas.</p>
<p>Hurter's Spadefoot (<i>Scaphiopus hurterii</i>)</p> 	<p>Identification: This burrowing species varies in coloration from grayish, purplish, to greenish. The pupil is vertical. The feet have black, sickle-shaped spades.</p> <p>Habitat: Areas of loose, sandy soils are preferred. The species is rarely seen outside of the breeding season (February to June), when it may be found in shallow temporary pools at night.</p> <p>Status: Nearest Arkansas records are from the Arkansas River Valley (including Crawford County), but records from extreme northeastern Oklahoma suggest that the species may just edge into western Benton and Washington counties.</p>
<p>Ringed Salamander (<i>Ambystoma annulatum</i>)</p> 	<p>Identification: This slender-built species is easily distinguished by the regular, yellow banding.</p> <p>Habitat: This species lives in forested habitat in the vicinity of small, woodland ponds. It may most easily be found crossing roads during heavy, cold rains of Fall (early October) which trigger nighttime migrations to breeding ponds.</p> <p>Status: Records come from Benton, Madison, and Washington counties. It is unconfirmed for Carroll and Crawford counties.</p>

<p>Marbled Salamander (<i>Ambystoma opacum</i>)</p> 	<p>Identification: This plump species is a midnight blue color with bold, broad, silvery-white crossbands (often forming the appearance of inverse circles).</p> <p>Habitat: This species can be found in a variety of habitats, but usually in areas considered lowland.</p> <p>Status: While common in the rest of the state, including parts of Crawford County, it is uncommon in the Ozarks. A couple of records come from Washington County. It is unknown from Benton, Carroll, and Madison counties.</p>
<p>Eastern Tiger Salamander (<i>Ambystoma tigrinum</i>)</p> 	<p>Identification: This large species is blotched in yellow like a "tiger".</p> <p>Habitat: A variety of habitats are suitable, but it may prefer grasslands with suitable breeding ponds nearby. It may most easily be found crossing roads at night during winter rains in December through February.</p> <p>Status: Isolated historical records are from Washington County and in the vicinity of Rogers, Benton County. Recent records from the winters of 2007-2010 come from within the city limits of Bentonville, Benton County.</p>
<p>Seal Salamander (<i>Desmognathus monticola</i>)</p> 	<p>Identification: This aquatic species has large cheeks and fin-like tail. It has an orangish stripe through the eye and orangish, crosshatch marking on the tail.</p> <p>Habitat: This species prefers cold, clear, rocky streams.</p> <p>Status: This introduced species is known only from the Spavinaw Creek drainage in Benton County. Records are needed to confirm its current range and if it has spread.</p>
<p>Western Slender Glass Lizard (<i>Ophisaurus attenuatus</i>)</p> 	<p>Identification: This species of lizard is <i>legless</i>. It can be distinguished from a snake by the presence of eyelids and external ear openings. Its tail breaks into pieces easily.</p> <p>Habitat: This species prefers grassland. It may be found along the edges of roadways, especially at sunrise after rain showers.</p> <p>Status: A clutch of young from a Bentonville city park was confirmed as a Benton County record in 2005. A couple of additional recent reports have come from Fayetteville, Washington County. Older records are from Carroll and Crawford counties. It is unconfirmed in Madison County.</p>
<p>Eastern Collared Lizard (<i>Crotaphytus collaris</i>)</p> 	<p>Identification: This species is relatively large and sometimes called a "Mountain Boomer". Females, males, and young look slightly different, but all have a distinctive 2-banded collar.</p> <p>Habitat: This species prefers open, rocky, glade habitat. It may be spotted basking atop large boulders.</p> <p>Status: A few isolated populations are known from extreme northeastern Benton County and Carroll and Washington counties. It is unconfirmed in Crawford and Madison counties.</p>
<p>Great Plains Skink (<i>Plestiodon obsoletus</i>)</p> 	<p>Identification: This species is a relatively large skink. The black markings may suggest stripes. The side scales are arranged in oblique rows.</p> <p>Habitat: This species prefers open, natural grassland.</p> <p>Status: Only two localities are known in Arkansas, one in extreme northeastern Benton County.</p>

<p>Southern Prairie Skink (<i>Plestiodon septentrionalis</i>)</p> 	<p>Identification: This species of skink will require close examination of scales to distinguish it from more common, similar-looking species. It has 2 postmental scales. A postnasal scale is absent.</p> <p>Habitat: This species prefers open grassland and rocky glades.</p> <p>Status: A handful of localities are known along the western-most border of Arkansas. It has been confirmed in Washington County in the vicinity of Devils Den State Park. It remains unconfirmed in Benton, Carroll, Crawford, and Madison counties.</p>
<p>Texas Horned Lizard (<i>Phrynosoma cornutum</i>)</p> 	<p>Identification: This species, also called a "Horny Toad", is flatly-built with numerous spikes, especially behind the head and along the sides.</p> <p>Habitat: This species prefers dry, exposed, sandy areas. It preys exclusively on ants.</p> <p>Status: Some historical state records come from Washington County in Fayetteville and Winslow. No recent records are known and the species is thought to be extinct in the state.</p>
<p>Mediterranean Gecko (<i>Hemidactylus turcicus</i>)</p> 	<p>Identification: This invasive species is ghostly in appearance. It is covered in wart-like bumps rather than scales. It has sticky toe pads that allow it to climb walls and even sometimes upside down.</p> <p>Habitat: This species is most likely to be found around human habitation. It can most easily be found at night on walls illuminated by vapor lights where it preys on insects.</p> <p>Status: This species is documented on the University of Arkansas campus, Fayetteville, Washington County. It has not been documented for Benton, Carroll, Crawford, or Madison counties.</p>
<p>Northern Scarletsnake (<i>Cemophora coccinea</i>)</p> 	<p>Identification: This tricolored species is distinguished from the more common Red Milksnake in that it has a <i>pointed</i>, shovel-like snout. The snout is always red and the belly is a plain cream color.</p> <p>Habitat: This species seems to be more common in areas of loose, sandy soils, but in NW Arkansas it is most likely to occur on flat, open, rocky glades. It is secretive and may be found hiding under rocks and occasionally crossing roads on humid and/or rainy summer nights. It is sometimes tilled up during excavation work.</p> <p>Status: This reclusive and hard-to-find species has been documented for Washington County. It remains undocumented for Benton, Carroll, Crawford, and Madison counties.</p>
<p>Variable Groundsnake (<i>Sonora semiannulata</i>)</p> 	<p>Identification: This species is highly <i>variable</i>. Common morphs include solid, striped, partially banded, and fully banded. Known Arkansas morphs include orange with black bands and plain brown with slight reddish stripe and single black neck band.</p> <p>Habitat: This species prefers open, rocky, glade habitat. It is secretive and may be found hiding under rocks.</p> <p>Status: Recent survey efforts have turned up a few individuals in Carroll County. Historical records are from the area of Sulfur Springs in Benton County, but these are from over 50 years ago.</p>
<p>Graham's Crayfish Snake (<i>Regina grahamii</i>)</p> 	<p>Identification: This rather drab, semi-aquatic species is dark brown with a thick lateral stripe near the belly and faint stripe down the back. The underside is a plain cream color.</p> <p>Habitat: This species prefers slower-moving, lowland waters.</p> <p>Status: Isolated records are from Washington County. Nearby records from Oklahoma and Missouri suggest that it may also be found in Benton and Crawford counties. An unconfirmed species of Regina was found near Huntsville, Madison County in the 1980's.</p>

<p style="text-align: center;">Queensnake (<i>Regina septemvittata</i>)</p> 	<p>Identification: This rather drab, semi-aquatic species is dark brown with a lighter lateral stripe near the belly. The underside is a cream color with four dark stripes.</p> <p>Habitat: This species prefers clear, clean rocky streams and rivers. It is secretive and may be found hiding under rocks, especially rocks that are partially submerged in the middle of ripples and along the banks.</p> <p>Status: Recent state records are known only from the Mulberry River and streams draining southward from the Boston Mountains. Historical (and questionable) records are from southern Stone County, Missouri. An unconfirmed species of Regina was found near Huntsville, Madison County in the 1980's. It is likely additional populations exist between the Mulberry River and southern Missouri.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Bullsnake (<i>Pituophis catenifer</i>)</p> 	<p>Identification: This large-bodied, constricting snake is yellowish in coloration with a series of squarish, chocolate-brown dorsal blotches that become more regular and contrasted toward the tail. It has an enlarged scale on its snout and is known to hiss loudly in defense.</p> <p>Habitat: This species prefers open grassland. It likely requires areas with high concentrations of burrowing rodents, such as gophers.</p> <p>Status: Records for this species from Oklahoma and Missouri come tantalizingly close to Arkansas. Unconfirmable, historical reports are from Washington and Benton counties. A 2008 specimen from within the city limits of Rogers was likely a released captive. It remains a species unconfirmed for the state.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Alligator Snapping Turtle (<i>Macrochelys temminckii</i>)</p> 	<p>Identification: This large aquatic species is distinguished from the Common Snapping Turtle by the presence of an extra row of scutes along the sides (the supramarginals), sharp and pronounced beak, eyes that are not easily viewed from straight above, and (when gaping in defense) a fleshy, red, lure-like tongue.</p> <p>Habitat: This is a species usually associated with larger bodies of water, such as large lakes and rivers. Sandy banks are needed for nesting. It rarely leaves the water (unlike the Common Snapping Turtle which is often found crossing roads).</p> <p>Status: This species is fairly well documented from the Arkansas River and the Mulberry River confluence. It is unconfirmed for Benton, Carroll, Madison, and Washington counties.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Ornate Box Turtle (<i>Terrapene ornata</i>)</p> 	<p>Identification: This species is distinguished from the more common Three-toed Box Turtle by the radiating yellow marks on the upper-shell, the relatively flatter top, and boldly patterned black and yellow under-shell. (The under-shell of the Three-toed Box Turtle is very plain.)</p> <p>Habitat: This species prefers open, natural grassland. It may most likely be found crossing roads shortly after rain showers.</p> <p>Status: Isolated, older records are from Benton and Washington counties. It is unconfirmed for Carroll, Crawford, and Madison counties.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Mississippi Mud Turtle (<i>Kinosternon subrubrum</i>)</p> 	<p>Identification: This small aquatic species has a smooth, domed upper-shell, two light lines on the head, and triangular-shaped pectoral scutes. It has no chin barbels.</p> <p>Habitat: A variety of aquatic habitats are suitable, but prefers slower-moving waters with soft bottoms.</p> <p>Status: This species is common in southern and eastern Arkansas. It has been documented in southern Crawford County. A single isolated record in NW Arkansas comes from the area of Logan Spring in Benton County. It is unconfirmed but likely to occur in Washington County.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Yellow Mud Turtle (<i>Kinosternon flavescens</i>)</p> 	<p>Identification: This small aquatic species has a smooth, domed upper-shell, two light lines on the head, and triangular-shaped pectoral scutes. It has no chin barbels. It is distinguished from the similar-looking Mississippi Mud Turtle by having a yellow throat and a 9th marginal scute that is higher than the 8th.</p> <p>Habitat: A variety of aquatic habitats are suitable, but prefers slower-moving waters with soft bottoms.</p> <p>Status: Records for this species from Oklahoma and Missouri come tantalizingly close to Arkansas. It remains a species unconfirmed for the state.</p>